



# SLENDER MOONWORT (*Botrychium lineare*)

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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### WHY IS THE FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE REVIEWING THE STATUS OF THE SLENDER MOONWORT?

The Biodiversity Legal Foundation submitted a petition to the Service on July 28, 1999, to list slender moonwort (*Botrychium lineare*) as endangered or threatened. After a petition is filed, the Service has 90 days to make a finding on whether the petition to list, delist or reclassify a species presents substantial information to demonstrate that the petitioned action may be warranted. If the finding is positive, as is the case with slender moonwort, the Service is then required to begin a review of the status of the species.

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### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE REVIEW?

The Service has 12 months from the date of petition receipt to gather information and comments on the biological status of the species, including:

- population locations
- range, distribution and population size
- current or planned activities that may affect the populations
- threats to populations

At the conclusion of the status review, the Service will publish a "12-month finding" to determine whether slender moonwort should be proposed for addition to the list of threatened and endangered species.

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### WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THIS PLANT ?

This small fern was once found in Idaho (Boundary County), Oregon (Wallowa County), Montana (Glacier and Lake Counties), California (Inyo County), and Colorado (Boulder and El Paso counties). Slender moonwort has also been documented in Quebec and New Brunswick, Canada. Populations in Idaho, Lake County, Montana, California, Boulder County, Colorado, and Canada are thought to no longer exist, as plants at some of these sites have not been seen since the early 1900s.

The plant thrives in habitat such as meadows, under trees, and on limestone cliffs mostly at higher elevations. Today, only five known sites support slender moonwort: two in Oregon, two in Colorado and one in Montana. Four of the five sites are on Federal land; one is on private land. Remaining populations of the plant are extremely small, ranging from two to 53 individuals.

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### WHAT ARE THE THREATS TO THE SLENDER MOONWORT?

Threats to this species include habitat succession due to fire suppression, livestock grazing, mining, exotic species, urban development, timber harvest, roads, recreation and naturally occurring events. All populations are potentially vulnerable to naturally occurring events or human activities. The decline of native plant species such as slender moonwort is an indicator of the overall health of the ecosystem in which it lives.

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### HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SLENDER MOONWORT?

Contact:  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Snake River Basin Office  
1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368  
Boise, Idaho 83709  
(208) 378-5243  
Robert Ruesink, Supervisor  
Edna Rey-Vizgirdas, Botanist